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ABSTRACT

Three essays are presented that discuss, in general terms, information that was collected in 1987-88 concerning the current status of black studies in the United States. The researchers were invited to survey selected black studies departments, programs, institutes, and centers judged to be representative of the structural diversity and programmatic scope of Afro-American and Africana studies across the country; to evaluate their present capacities and strengths; and to assess their future needs. Since the conversations on which this material is based were confidential it could not be reported in full; however, the essays contain substantial amounts of general information. The essays are entitled: "The Intellectual and Institutional Development of Africana Studies" (Robert L. Harris, Jr.); "Black Studies: An Overview" (Darlene Clark Hine); and "Black Studies in the Midwest" (Nellie McKay). (GLR)

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THREE ESSAYS

Black Studies in the United States

ROBERT L. HARRIS, JR.
DARLENE CLARK HINE
NELLIE McKAY

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Preface

The Ford Foundation has supported black studies since the first programs were established on American college and university campuses in the late 1960s. Since 1969 the Foundation has granted some $19 million to assist the development of both graduate and undergraduate programs and, more recently, to strengthen scholarship and research at selected centers of Afro-American and Africana studies. Another $1 million has supported editing, archival, and oral history projects documenting the black experience. Given the size of the Foundation's commitment and the growing impact of Afro-American scholarship on traditional disciplines, in 1982 the Foundation asked Nathan Huggins, then the director of the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Research at Harvard University, to review the evolution of black studies and its future prospects. This report was published by the Foundation in 1985.*

Recognizing the rapid growth of the field and the emergence of a new generation of scholars in the 1980s, the Foundation commissioned a series of consultancies in 1987–88 intended to provide a sense of the current state of black studies in the United States. Three distinguished scholars were invited to survey selected black studies departments, programs, institutes, and centers judged to be representative of the structural diversity and programmatic scope of Afro-American and Africana studies across the country; to evaluate their present capacities and strengths; and to assess their future needs. From their reports, we hoped to gain a fuller understanding of the resources in the black studies field and its intellectual and institutional priorities over the next decade. Thus informed, the Foundation would be better able to design the next phase of its continuing support for black studies in a way that responded to the concerns of scholar/teachers in the field.

From the outset, it was recognized that the survey could not be comprehensive. Further, it was understood that the consultants' reports would be confidential. But as the consultants traveled around the country visiting various black studies enterprises, word of the survey spread, and interest in their findings grew. The Foundation received numerous inquiries asking if the reports would be released in

* Nathan Huggins, *Afro-American Studies: A Report to the Ford Foundation*, 1985.

some form. Since both the consultants and the individuals they interviewed had understood that these conversations, and the observations resulting from them, were confidential, we could not release the reports in full. Nevertheless, the reports contained a substantial amount of general information about the black studies field, and it seemed to us and to our consultants that these observations and assessments should be made public.

The three essays that follow have been edited to delete all references to individuals and institutions except those cited to illustrate a general point. The essays vary in length and character partly because of the order in which the consultancies were undertaken and also because, apart from specific information requested on each site visited, we did not ask the consultants to adhere to a single format. Our first consultant, Darlene Clark Hine, John Hannah Professor of History at Michigan State University, surveyed a substantial number of institutions, but time constraints prevented her from visiting the Midwestern universities she had hoped to include in the extensive report she submitted to the Foundation. Nellie McKay, Professor of American and Afro-American Literature at the University of Wisconsin, agreed to cover black studies in the Midwest. Believing it unnecessary to restate at any length the general points Professor Hine had made about the state of black studies nationwide, Professor McKay concentrated on the distinguishing aspects of the field in the Midwest and on the sites she visited. Robert L. Harris, Jr., Director of the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University, prefaced his survey of black studies in the City University of New York and the State University of New York with a discussion of the development of black studies as an area of scholarly inquiry. His preface serves as a useful introduction to the two essays that follow.

The Foundation is pleased to publish these essays. We are grateful to the three scholars who served as our consultants for the intelligence and commitment they brought to the project. We believe they have made a significant contribution to black studies and to all who have an interest in promoting the health and continuing growth of the field.

Franklin A. Thomas
President
Ford Foundation

The Intellectual and Institutional Development of Africana Studies

By Robert L. Harris, Jr.

Africana studies* is the multidisciplinary analysis of the lives and thought of people of African ancestry on the African continent and throughout the world. It embraces Africa, Afro-America, and the Caribbean, but does not confine itself to those three geographical areas. Africana studies examines people of African ancestry wherever they may be found—for example, in Central and South America, Asia, and the Pacific Islands. Its primary means of organization are racial and cultural. Many of the themes of Africana studies are derived from the historical position of African peoples in relation to Western societies and in the dynamics of slavery, oppression, colonization, imperialism, emancipation, self-determination, liberation, and socioeconomic and political development.

There have been four stages in the intellectual and institutional development of Africana studies as an area of scholarly inquiry. The first stage began in the 1890s and lasted until the Second World War. During this first stage, numerous organizations emerged to document, record, and analyze the history, culture, and status of African peoples. For example, the Bethel Literary and Historical Association of Washington, D.C., formed in 1881, sponsored lectures on numerous topics, such as the Egyptians, the Zulus, and various aspects of African culture, in addition to contemporary issues affecting African Americans. Other organizations functioned in a similar manner—for example, Philadelphia's American Negro Historical Society, established in 1897, Washington, D.C.'s American Negro Academy, also started in 1897, and New York's Negro Society for Historical Research, organized in 1911.

These early black literary and historical associations sought to preserve and to publicize the legacy of African peoples. They were superseded in 1915, when Carter G. Woodson formed the Association for the Study of Afro-American (formerly Negro) Life and History (ASALH), which still survives today. Woodson laid the groundwork for systematic study of African peoples through the association's annual

* For a discussion of nomenclature in black studies, see pages 15–16.

meetings; the *Journal of Negro History*, launched in 1916; the national observance of Negro History Week (now Black History Month), started in 1926; publication of the *Negro History Bulletin*, begun in 1933; and the formation of Associated Publishers to print books on the black experience in America and throughout the world. ASALH has been the premier organization in promoting historical consciousness and in generating greater understanding of African heritage in the United States.

In 1897 W.E.B. DuBois initiated an ambitious program at Atlanta University to examine various categories of African-American life in ten-year cycles. He proposed that such studies be continued for at least 100 years to provide knowledge and understanding of the black family, church, social organizations, education, and economic development in the United States. From 1898 to 1914, the Atlanta University studies produced sixteen monographs, which consisted of more than 2,100 pages of research. DuBois, Woodson, Lorenzo J. Greene, Charles H. Wesley, E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph J. Bunche, Charles S. Johnson, Abram Harris, Sterling Brown, and other pioneering black scholars produced an impressive body of scholarship to correct the errors, omissions, and distortions of black life and history that prevailed among white academics and the American public.

The second stage for Africana studies began with the study of black America by Gunnar Myrdal. This stage was in some respects a setback. Myrdal, who began his project for the Carnegie Corporation in 1939, confined his analysis to the American social, political, and economic order. There was growing concern about the role and place of the black population during the Second World War, as a majority of African Americans became urban. Black migration northward, which had begun in large numbers during the 1890s, had accelerated during World War I, and had slowed during the Depression of the 1930s, mushroomed during World War II, making the black presence in America more a national than a regional or primarily southern concern. Believing that black people in the United States were fundamentally Americans who had no significant African cultural background or identity, Myrdal accepted the formulation of the University of Chicago School of Sociology that ethnic and racial contact led not only to conflict but also to inevitable assimilation and absorption into the dominant society. His two-volume study, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, published in 1944, had an

important influence on scholarship, especially the work of white academics during this second stage.

White scholars, by and large, had ignored black people. The Columbia University historian John W. Burgess had boldly stated: "[A] black skin means membership in a race of men which has never itself succeeded in subjecting passion to reason; has never, therefore, created any civilization of any kind." After World War II, as the black population in the United States became predominantly urban and as scholarship in general shed notions of inherent racial inferiority and superiority with the Nazi debacle, white scholars devoted increasing attention to African Americans' status in the United States. They sought environmental rather than biogenetic explanations for African Americans' inferior status.

In *Mark of Oppression* (1951), Abram Kardiner and Lionel Ovesey hypothesized that African Americans emerged from slavery without a culture, with "no intra-psychic defenses—no pride, no group solidarity, no tradition." They argued: "The marks of his previous status were still upon him—socially, psychologically, and emotionally, and from these he has never since freed himself." Stanley Elkins in his book *Slavery* (1959) concluded that African Americans were not genetically inferior but were made inferior by the process of enslavement, which they internalized and passed on to succeeding generations. In *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (1963), Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan attributed African-American status to the absence of middle-class values and norms among the black population in general. Two years later, in *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, Moynihan wrote: "Three centuries of injustice have brought about deep-seated structural distortions in the life of the Negro American." He concluded that "the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world."

Whereas Burgess had implied that Africans had never created anything of worth and therefore African Americans were descended from an inferior people, post-World War II white scholars, in the main, identified African-American status not with an inglorious African past but with deficiencies occasioned by slavery, segregation, and discrimination. It is important to note that these scholars believed that the end of racial oppression would not immediately produce racial equality, not because of lack of social opportunity but because of the accumu-

lated pathological behavior of black people. In other words, black people were not divinely created inferior but were made inferior over time. The sum of racial oppression and its alleged internalization by black people dramatically affected their lives across generations.

Another significant post-World War II development was the creation of African studies programs that had no real link to black people in the New World. Although Melville Herskovits, a white anthropologist and proponent of African studies, tried to join the study of Africa with the lives of black people in the New World, African studies became wedded to a modernization theory that measured African societies by Western standards. African history, culture, and politics were explored more within the context of the colonial powers than with any attention to African cultural continuities in the Western hemisphere. This compartmentalization of knowledge regarding black people departed significantly from the scholarship of individuals such as DuBois and Woodson during the first stage in the development of Africana studies.

The civil rights revolution, the black power drive, and the black consciousness movement initiated a third stage of Africana studies. During this era, larger numbers of black students entered predominantly white colleges and universities. Most of these students were the first generation of their families to attend college. They encountered faculties that were almost entirely white and a curriculum that was primarily Eurocentric in perspective. The "melting pot" thesis prevailed as the paradigm of American society in which all groups, regardless of background, assimilated to an ideal that was primarily white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. Ironically, at a time when African nations were achieving independence from colonial rule, Africa seemed unrelated to black people in the United States. If Africa was discussed in classes, it was generally as an adjunct to European imperialism. In large measure, black people were seen as pawns rather than as actors, as victims more than as victors.

Together with many black scholars from the first stage of Africana studies, black college students challenged the prevailing orthodoxies on predominantly white campuses. They demanded the employment of black professors and the establishment of Africana studies departments and programs. They pressed for the inclusion of African studies in the newly formed Africana studies programs. The inclusion of African studies was important for several reasons. First, African Ameri-

cans have historically linked their destiny with the future of Africa. Second, the image of Africa has had significant consequences for the status of African Americans. Third, African ancestry has informed the cultural heritage of African Americans as much as their presence in the United States. Fourth, the history, politics, and culture of Africa could stand as a counterweight to the dominance of Western culture in American education.

The Eurocentric focus of the college curriculum basically excluded people of African ancestry or studied them through a European filter. Eurocentrist scholars ignored the growth of civilization in Africa, especially in Egypt, or coopted Egyptian civilization as part of a European rather than an African continuum. They also ignored the African heritage of African Americans, characterizing them as having begun their existence in North America as *tabulae rasae*—blank slates to be imprinted with Euro-American culture.

Although some colleges and universities were willing to establish Africana studies programs, they were less willing to organize Africana studies departments. Faculty within the traditional departments were reluctant to give up their prerogative of determining what constituted a course in history, literature, or government; who would take such courses; and how the professors teaching them would be evaluated for employment, promotion, and tenure. Advocates of Africana studies departments questioned how members of traditional departments that had not offered courses on the black experience or hired black faculty could sit in judgment on the nature and quality of work being done in this newly emerging field of study.

The third stage of Africana studies, from about the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, was a period of legitimization and institutionalization. Few scholars were prepared to teach Africana studies courses. The shift in perspective from Eurocentrism to Afrocentrism required the recovery, organization, and accessibility of research materials that made black people, their lives, and their thoughts the center of analysis and interpretation. Many white scholars in particular had assumed that there was not sufficient documentation on which to base sound judgments about the personal and collective experiences of black people in the United States. However, with the new interest in black life and culture, federal, state, and local archivists combed their collections for materials on the African-American experience and published several useful guides. Major projects began assembling and publishing the

papers of black leaders, writers, and organizations. It is now clear that there are abundant materials (print, visual, and sound) to reconstruct and to interpret the African-American past.

The prodigious research of black and white scholars has dramatically changed the manner in which we now view African Americans. Most scholars today acknowledge the persistence of African culture in the United States. They no longer accept the idea that African Americans passively acquiesced to oppression, recognizing that, on the contrary, they actively resisted oppression in a variety of ways. In large measure, scholars have come to accept the United States as a pluralistic society with multiple viable cultures, rather than as a "melting pot." We think more of acculturation, with give-and-take, than of assimilation—particularly in the form of total absorption into the dominant culture, which itself is now being redefined.

Africana studies has achieved legitimacy and has become institutionalized within higher education. It now has moved into a fourth stage of theoretical refinement and more sophisticated analysis and interpretation. The fundamental research tools have been developed, although there will certainly be a need to update and to supplement them as new materials become available. In general, the field is in fairly good condition, but there are some problems, or perhaps opportunities to improve it.

Because the formats for multidisciplinary programs vary from campus to campus, there will probably not be a single method of organization for Africana studies. The ideal format is the department structure, which allows for selection of faculty and development of curriculum. Programs with faculty in traditional departments can also be successful, provided that they have some control of faculty lines. The program, however, becomes a more complex arrangement, especially in decisions for hiring, promotion, and tenure. Joint appointments carry similar problems, especially for junior faculty. They are less burdensome for senior faculty, whose tenure has already been established. Cross-listing of courses is one means by which departments and programs can take greater advantage of faculty resources on their campuses. However, before such cross-listing can be effective, there must first be a strong core faculty within the department or program. Otherwise, the Africana studies curriculum becomes too dependent on the priorities of other departments.

One goal for the fourth stage of Africana studies should be to

broaden and deepen the field of inquiry. This prospect becomes somewhat difficult for those departments and programs with limited numbers of faculty. Small faculties are stretched thin when they attempt to offer a major and to cover Africa, Afro-America, and the Caribbean. Offering a comprehensive program in Africana studies has meant that some departments and programs play primarily service roles in providing introductory courses that are used to fulfill one or more distribution requirements for graduation. These efforts have little opportunity to supply depth in the field of study. Faculty become very much occupied with servicing large introductory courses and have little time for research and writing in an area of specialization. There is a tendency for faculty to become generalists familiar with a broad range of knowledge rather than specialists who advance the frontiers of specific areas of knowledge.

As Africana studies moves into its fourth stage, as well as its third decade on predominantly white campuses, there is a need to reexamine the curriculum on many campuses. Some departments and programs offer a hodgepodge of courses that have evolved over time in response to student interest and faculty availability. Many departments and programs, particularly those with small faculties, need to determine what they can do best with their resources. Some have specific strengths upon which to build; others need to reconsider where they want to concentrate their resources. Unless they have the faculty and the administrative support, many departments and programs cannot offer successful comprehensive Africana studies courses. In a 1986 report on the "Status of Afro-American Studies in the State University of New York," Dr. Kenneth Hall showed that the preponderance of students are attracted by courses on Afro-American history, the civil rights movement, film, music, and contemporary Africa. Courses on history and culture (literature, music, film, drama, and dance) seem to appeal most to a cross section of students (black and white), with politics close behind.

In many respects, Africana studies faculty need to return to the basic question: Africana studies for what? There was much discussion and debate on this question during the early days of organizing, when the focus was on the quest for legitimacy and institutionalization. On many campuses, Africana studies was to provide the black presence, to supply role models for students, to have an active advising and counseling function, to organize film series, lectures, and symposia, and to

influence traditional departments in the composition of their faculty and curriculum. This was a tall order that exhausted many Africana studies faculty. Having expended their energy on getting the new field off the ground, many faculty had not devoted sufficient time to research and publication and thus were caught short when evaluated for promotion and tenure.

Today, there is some debate about whether Africana studies faculty should play their former roles of counselors and mentors or give more time to research. Some of this tension would be eased if administrators supported campus-life specialists who would organize cultural activities for black students in particular and for all students in general. Faculty development is an important element within the university, and it is especially important for Africana studies faculty, many of whom need to reorient themselves toward greater scholarship.

Public colleges that are clustered in metropolitan areas have a unique opportunity to foster scholarship in Africana studies by establishing master's degree programs and research institutes. Such projects might encourage Africana studies departments and programs to develop strengths in specific areas. These strengths could be drawn upon for graduate programs and research institutes to promote greater scholarship by identifying areas of investigation and by bringing together scholars with similar interests. Research institutes might also be a means to influence more students to pursue advanced degrees and expand the number of minority scholars.

Answers to the question of "Africana studies for what?" will have a significant effect on the shape and content of the curriculum. To address these issues, the National Council for Black Studies has already embarked on a program of summer institutes for college teachers. Such responses will also influence the role of Africana studies on different campuses. Africana studies will continue to vary from college to college. Ultimately, however, there is a need for greater clarification and understanding through more dialogue about its specific function on various campuses.

Black Studies: An Overview

By Darlene Clark Hine

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, unique historical circumstances propelled the development of Afro-American and Africana studies in colleges and universities. Few of these early endeavors were the result of careful and deliberate planning and analysis. Typically, they were established in response to political exigencies rather than intellectual and academic imperatives. These and other factors contributed to ongoing structural and organizational diversity. Today it seems that no two black studies programs are alike. Their diversity is evidenced in faculty size and composition, relations with university administrators and more traditional departments, curriculum, degrees offered, budgets, spatial resources, range of special programs, and the nature of their community outreach.

An important objective of this investigation was to examine the present status of these programs: How well have they been supported by their institutions? To what degree have they been able to secure productive faculty? Have they provided their faculties with the requisite resources and nurturing that encourage the quality teaching, research, and service required for success in the academy?

The ongoing debate over nomenclature is a graphic illustration of residual problems growing out of the turbulent times in which these programs burst upon the academic scene. The term "black studies" has become a generic designation, vociferously opposed by some who view the phrase as less than illuminating. Critics argue that this designation suggests that only black students and black faculty should be interested in this area of intellectual inquiry. Most institutions appear to prefer the titles "Afro-American," "African and Afro-American," or "Africana" studies. On the one hand, those who insist on the term "Africana studies" maintain that "Afro-American studies" implies that the primary focus of teaching and research is the historical, cultural, and political development of Afro-Americans living within the boundaries of North America. Moreover, "African and Afro-American studies" neglect the Caribbean and other parts of the Americas. On the other hand, "Africana studies" encompasses a broader geographical, if not disciplinary, reach, spanning both North and South America, the Caribbean, and the African continent—in short, the African Diaspora.

Of course, few of the current programs possess the requisite institutional resources, faculty positions, or budget lines to be truly "Africana." But the intent points in the right direction and therefore is certainly praiseworthy.

The attempt to identify and assess black studies endeavors accurately is further complicated by the differences in structure and mission between "departments," "programs," "centers," and "institutes." Black studies "departments" are best characterized as separate, autonomous units possessing an exclusive right and privilege to hire and grant tenure to their faculty, certify students, confer degrees, and administer a budget. Black studies "programs" may offer majors and minors but rarely confer degrees. And perhaps more importantly, all faculty appointments in programs are of the "joint," "adjunct," or "associate" variety. These professors are in the unenviable position of having to please two masters to secure appointment and tenure.

"Centers" and "institutes" defy easy categorization. As a rule, they tend to be administrative units more concerned with the production and dissemination of scholarship and with the professional development of teachers and scholars in the field than with undergraduate teaching. Unfortunately, considerable confusion surrounds the name "center." Many people view centers as merely cultural or social facilities designed to ease the adjustment of black students to predominantly white campus life. Thus, centers are often denigrated and dismissed as having little or no relevance to black studies, which is imagined to be purely an academic or intellectual endeavor, albeit with political-advocacy overtones. However, the good work being done at centers like those at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and the University of Michigan certainly should correct these misconceptions.

University Administrators

It was encouraging and refreshing to encounter so many white university administrators who sang the praises of their black studies departments, programs, centers, and institutes. In fact, there was scarcely a discordant note. From the perspectives of the more positively inclined administrators on predominantly white campuses, it appears that black studies not only has come of age but also has been making important contributions to the academy. Although it is heartening to witness this attitudinal transformation, given the initial vehement

objections to the creation of black studies units, it is nonetheless necessary to probe beyond the surface to assess fully the contemporary status of black studies.

Twenty years ago, when black students first demanded the establishment of black studies departments, programs, and centers, few of the beleaguered white administrators would have predicted a long life for these enterprises. Many undoubtedly wished that black studies would go away; others tried to thwart growth and development. Most of those who opposed the creation of black studies units claimed that these units would lower academic standards because they believed such endeavors lacked intellectual substance.

It is not surprising that at some institutions black studies units offered little intellectual challenge. Undertrained people were brought in to head programs hastily contrived to preserve campus peace. Unfortunately, the early development and subsequent evolution of black studies were further tainted by the media's sensationalized coverage of the armed black students at Cornell University and the 1969 shoot-out at UCLA, which left two students dead. In the minds of many, black studies would forever remain nothing more than a new kind of academic ghetto. University administrators who valued "peace" and "campus rest" had little inclination, courage, or will to insist on quality. Thus, black studies units seldom were held to the traditional modes of evaluation and scrutiny observed elsewhere in the academy.

By 1987, however, the tide had turned. There has been a discernible shift among college administrators from amused contempt or indifference to enthusiastic support of black studies. Now administrators are eager to improve the quality of their programs and departments. One potent factor has been the availability of a larger pool of productive, well-trained black scholars willing, indeed anxious, to head and/or work in black studies. No longer do administrators have to rely on the local minister or community activist to oversee and teach black studies. If they are willing to put up the money, administrators can recruit productive black scholars.

Another motivation fueling the change in attitude toward black studies is institutional expediency. Faced with the specter of declining black student enrollments, university administrators are increasingly using strong black studies departments, programs, centers, and institutes as recruitment devices. Moreover, as is often the case, the only critical mass of black faculty working at many of these institutions

is housed in black studies divisions. It is sad but true that without black studies, Chicano studies, women's studies, or Native American studies departments or programs, few colleges and universities could boast of having an integrated or pluralistic faculty.

Institutional expediency and a larger pool of black scholars notwithstanding, one fact deserves underscoring. Black studies departments and their faculties have proven to be a continuing source of intellectual stimulation on many American campuses. Black studies has opened up vast and exciting new areas of scholarship, especially in American history and literature, and has spurred intellectual inquiry into diverse social problems affecting the lives of significant portions of the total population. Lectures, seminars, and conferences sponsored by black studies units provide a threefold benefit: Students introduced to authorities from outside of the academy are impressed with the fact that there are many ways of expressing and knowing. Faculty, black and white, have the opportunity to share their expertise, test assumptions, and receive immediate feedback on work in progress. Finally, black community residents are encouraged to perceive universities as more accessible and less foreign. As members of these communities begin to identify with universities, they develop a greater appreciation for learning, and a respect for the scholarship of black professors.

Black Studies Curriculum

Despite its contributions and successes over the past twenty years, black studies still has to contend with and resolve rampant confusion, conflict, and creative tensions. The issues being debated include nomenclature; curriculum; identity, mission, and structure; graduate programs; faculty recruitment, retention, and development; accreditation; and professionalization. There is an ongoing debate, with no signs of immediate resolution, over whether black studies is a field or a discipline. The problems surrounding curriculum are worthy of special attention. Even within the same departments, faculties often find it impossible to agree upon a standard or core for all sections of the same introductory course in Afro-American studies. It is regrettable that there is no special summer institute or training program where black studies administrators and faculty could discuss and perhaps map an appropriate and effective curriculum.

The curriculum—whether it is called black studies, Africana

studies, or Afro-American and African studies—should reflect an ordered arrangement of courses progressing from the introductory through the intermediate to advanced levels. In terms of content, a sound black studies curriculum must include courses in Afro-American history and in Afro-American literature and literary criticism. There should be a complement of courses in sociology, political science, psychology, and economics. A cluster of courses in art, music, and language and/or linguistics should also be made available to students. Finally, depending on resources and the number of faculty, a well-rounded studies effort should offer courses on other geographical areas of the black Diaspora—the Caribbean and/or Africa. African and Afro-American and Africana studies programs and departments should, as their names imply, offer a variety of courses on black societies in the New World as well as on Africa.

Although deciding what to name a unit and developing a sound and coherent curriculum are challenging, a more daunting task is acquiring resources to recruit and retain an appropriate faculty, one that includes assistant, associate, and full professors. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, black studies units simply drew into their domain whoever happened to be available and willing to join them. Thus, little uniformity in curriculum could be achieved across the country. With the economic difficulties and retrenchment of the late 1970s, many black studies faculties declined in size, producing an even more fragmented curriculum. To ensure that existing courses were offered on a reasonable and routine basis, black studies administrators had to rely heavily on part-time, visiting, or temporary appointees. Most often those available to accept such positions were in the creative arts—musicians, dancers, poets, and fiction writers.

More recently, black studies departments have increasingly relied on cross-listing courses to augment curriculum. The cross-listing of courses is both reasonable and advantageous because it builds bridges between black studies and the more traditional departments within the university, thus decreasing somewhat tendencies toward isolation and marginality. To be sure, there are pitfalls, and cautious administrators must be ever vigilant. Adaptive "survival" measures may encourage some university administrators to reduce further the resources allocated to black studies. After all, if black studies is consistently able to "make do" with less, one could logically conclude that it needed fewer resources in the first place. This is a special concern for departments

and programs with small numbers of majors and minors and with low course enrollments.

All of these factors—lack of a critical mass of well-trained faculty, excessive reliance on temporary hires, absence of a coherent curriculum and of content consensus for even introductory courses, and the increasing use of cross-listing of courses—bespeak the difficulties confronting and perhaps threatening the autonomy of many black studies departments. These are certainly among the concerns of the leadership of the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS). I suspect that the officers of NCBS will experience considerable frustration as the organization attempts to design a standardized curriculum. Although it is perhaps perverse to see anything positive in this disarray, the major strength of the black studies enterprise may well be its ever-changing and evolving nature. The rapid proliferation of knowledge in the field is a strong argument in support of institutional flexibility. Faculty in this area need to be free to develop new courses, to experiment with different methodologies, and to adopt nontraditional texts, just as quickly as new knowledge is produced.

Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Programs in Black Studies

One of the characteristics of a viable discipline is the authority to confer degrees and certificates to students who have mastered a particular body of knowledge. Black studies faculty and administrators have been quite concerned with this issue. The majority of the more autonomous departments of black studies do, in fact, award B.A. degrees. Programs in black studies vary. Some offer majors while most offer at least minors to students receiving a degree from the more traditional academic disciplines. In other words, the student may receive a B.A. degree in history, sociology, political science, or biology, chemistry, business administration, or education—with a concentration in Afro-American studies.

Few black studies units offer master's degrees. Of the half dozen or so that do, the departments at Cornell and UCLA and the program at Yale are the most visible and are highly respected. Most of the M.A. degree students at Cornell and Yale go on to pursue Ph.D. degrees in traditional disciplines at some of the better institutions in the country. Others enter the labor force, working in social service agencies, busi-

nesses, or state and local governments. Cornell's Master of Professional Studies degree is specially designed to prepare students to work in community settings.

As with many other issues in black studies, there is no consensus about the wisdom of developing graduate degree programs in Afro-American studies. Certainly, at this stage in the evolution of black studies, there is a need for a creditable Ph.D. degree program. As I traveled around the country, black studies scholars expressed enthusiasm about the prospects of making a Ph.D. degree program available to students.*

Black Scholars and the Modern Black Studies Movement

At present, there are a number of top-flight black scholars, more than at any time in history. They are producing first-rate, indeed award-winning, books and articles in areas of black studies. By far the most exhilarating part of the entire project involved meeting these scholars and becoming familiar with their work. No assessment of the overall status and impact of black studies would be complete without noting the research activities of this latest generation of black professors and administrators. Because the absolute numbers of black professors is small and declining, it is easy to lose sight of the quality and breadth of their research and to minimize the impact that they have had on scholarship in all branches of knowledge.

The collective scholarship of black professors provides a sound foundation for the future development of black studies as a discipline. To a great extent, this scholarship will ensure the eventual institutionalization of black studies within the academy. As long as black scholars remain productive and competitive, and devote considerable attention to recruiting and training the next generation of scholars, black studies will enjoy a presence on America's campuses. It is, however, precisely the need to recruit, retain, and educate young black men and women in the humanistic and social science disciplines that casts a cloud over the joy and exuberance accompanying any serious examination of the quality of black scholarship in the last two decades. For a variety of reasons, fewer black students are entering graduate

* In 1988 Temple University established the first Ph.D. program in African-American studies.

school with plans for academic careers. At every stop on my tour of black studies units, faculty members and administrators, black and white, broached the topic and admitted that this problem was of critical importance to the future of black studies.

The numerous monographs, articles, and manuscript editing projects produced by black scholars have fueled the movement to reclaim the forgotten or obscured dimensions of the black past. Their new interpretations of past and present conditions affecting all aspects of black life have wrought a veritable revolution, albeit a still largely unheralded one, in the ways in which even traditional historians, literature theorists, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, psychologists, and political scientists approach their work whenever it touches upon the experience of black people.

There is reason to be excited and pleased with the record of intellectual accomplishment evident in scattered institutions around the country. Regrettably, most of these black scholars have little contact with each other. Nevertheless, because there are so many recognizably productive and accomplished scholars the future of black studies appears bright in spite of all of the structural complexities and creative tensions. In the remainder of this paper, I will address several factors concerning black scholars: the role of philanthropic foundations in their development, the perspectives reflected in some of their works, and the relationship between their scholarship and black studies as an organized unit within universities and colleges.

Any perusal of the acknowledgments and prefaces of some of the refreshingly original recent works of black scholars demonstrates the critical importance of the scholarships and fellowships made available by foundations and other organizations, including those specifically set aside for minority group scholars. Without these special fellowships, I dare say the record of productivity in black studies would not be so impressive.

To illustrate this point, I shall discuss three recently published and widely praised (within black studies circles, that is) volumes authored by black women scholars, the most recent group to establish a viable presence in the academy. Gloria T. Hull, professor of English at the University of Delaware, co-editor of *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press, 1982) and editor of *Give Us Each Day: The Diary of Alice Dunbar-Nelson* (New York: Norton, 1984), has

recently published a provocative and icon-shattering book, *Color, Sex, and Poetry: Three Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987). No one who reads it will ever again be able to think of the Harlem Renaissance in quite the same way. Hull effectively unveils the rampant sexism and chauvinism of the black male leaders of the Renaissance. In her preface, Hull wrote that in addition to a faculty research grant from the University of Delaware and a summer stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship enabled her "to do the requisite, remaining travel and research" (p. ix).

E. Frances White, MacArthur Professor of History and Black Studies at Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass., and author of *Sierra Leone's Settler Women Traders: Women on the Afro-European Frontier* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), observed in her preface: "I received funding from the African American Scholars Council, the Danforth Foundation (Kent Fellowship) and the Rootbert Fund to aid me in my initial research. An A.W. Mellon Faculty Development Grant and a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar Fellowship helped me to return to Sierra Leone to collect further material" (p. x). White's brilliant study contributes a feminist perspective to the continuing debate over the impact of colonial rule on women in Africa.

I first learned of Sylvia Ardyn Boone's *Radiance From the Waters: Concepts of Feminine Beauty in Mende Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) from black historian Nell Irvin Painter of the University of North Carolina. Painter commented, "It's a *wonderful* book that takes real black beauty, African beauty, seriously, in an academic not a commercial way."* The volume is indeed dazzling. Boone noted in her acknowledgment, "The Foreign Area Fellowship Program of the Social Science Research Council funded the first part of my work in England and later in Sierra Leone. A Dissertation Year Fellowship from the American Association of University Women and a grant from the Ford Foundation National Fellowship Fund financed additional research and then the write-up" (p. ix). Boone is an associate professor of the history of art and African and Afro-American studies at Yale University.

I have highlighted these outstanding examples of black scholarship because the study of black women is the current frontier in black

* Painter to Hine, June 22, 1987.

studies. Combined with the historical studies of professors Jacqueline Jones of Wellesley College (*Song of Sorrow, Song of Love: Black Women, Work and the Family in Slavery and Freedom*, New York: Basic Books, 1985) and Deborah G. White at Rutgers University (*Ar'n't I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*, New York: Norton, 1985), the novels of Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Paule Marshall, the literary criticism of Prof. Barbara Christian at the University of California, Berkeley (*Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1980), and the black feminist theory of Prof. Bell Hooks of Yale University, the three examples of black scholarship mentioned above would make for a dynamic course. Because the curriculum in black studies is so flexible and fluid, unfettered by disciplinary constraints, such a course would be introduced and taught with elan. Moreover, it should be noted that quite a few of the directors and chairs of black studies—for example, at Cornell and at the University of Mississippi—have established working ties with women's studies.

In addition to fellowship support, foundations have provided major funding for a host of black editing projects. A few of the notable projects are: the Frederick Douglass Papers, John Blassingame, editor; the Booker T. Washington Papers, Louis Harlan, editor; and the Freedmen and Southern Society Project, Ira Berlin, editor. These projects have made accessible to scholars invaluable documents and primary sources. Their significance to black studies scholarship cannot be exaggerated.

The massive Black Periodical Literature Project edited by Prof. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., of Cornell University, who is also author of *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), is a particularly important venture. His monographs continue to break new ground in literary theory and are indeed changing the way theorists evaluate and interpret black literature. The fiction project, on the other hand, reclaims the literary efforts of past generations of black writers. Gates's efforts are well-funded and deservedly so.

An especially encouraging sign of the vitality of black studies is the rising number of black scholars who are contemplating and/or engaging in collaborative research projects. This progression from individual research to collaborative efforts involving many people from different disciplines is a natural one. A typical first book or major publication is

usually a revised dissertation. Now that many black scholars are working on second and third books and, most importantly, have acquired tenure, they are eager to develop collaborative studies. This impulse should be encouraged, as it bodes well for the development of black studies as a discipline.

In the early years, black studies units justified their intellectual existence on the grounds that they shattered the confining and restrictive boundaries of traditional disciplines. Actually, as far as I have been able to discern, most of the individual scholars in these programs and departments have published works that are very much in keeping with the methodological canons of the disciplines in which they were formally trained. It was naive and unrealistic to expect the young historian or sociologist of the Afro-American experience to retool, master a new, still inadequately defined Afrocentric methodology, and then prepare publishable manuscripts and win tenure—all within a six-year period.

In sum, I am optimistic about the future of black studies because of the energy, creativity, industry, and achievements of black scholars. The dream that black studies can be in the forefront of interdisciplinary research and writing deserves all available nourishment. The contemporary black studies movement will be considerably enhanced and sustained by serious professional scholars engaged in research and writing of the black experience. The creative potential of black studies, however, will become a reality only to the extent that foundations and universities provide full support.

Black Studies in the Midwest

By Nellie McKay

In the Midwest, as elsewhere, black studies cannot be reduced to a simple or single formula that explains it. At present, the field is defined and practiced in many ways, which vary from institution to institution. There are those whose mission is essentially the pursuit of knowledge inside the academy, so that this knowledge may be applied broadly to the world outside. For others, the primary goal is full identification with the black community outside the walls of white academia. The common reference point is the validity of the African Diaspora experience—the creation of an active consciousness that a rich culture springs from Africa, which her children, scattered across the face of the globe, share and celebrate for its uniqueness, power, and strength.

Beyond that, as the Hine report noted, among no combination of programs is there even an agreement on curriculum. This, of course, need not reflect negatively on the field of black studies. On the contrary, the diversity of approaches is healthy, offering a breadth and scope of expression that emphasize possibilities not yet discovered. In surveying black studies in the Midwest, I discovered that as black studies reaches the end of its second decade of existence, there is a new surge of energy and a renewed commitment among many people, white and black, to make this new field a permanent part of our Western knowledge base.

I also perceived a renewed commitment among predominantly white institutions to strengthen black studies and to increase the number of black faculty on their campuses. This comes at a time when at least one group of black scholars inside of these universities—those who completed graduate work between the mid and late 1970s and who have proved themselves good citizens of the intellectual world—have achieved a level of maturity that enables them to know exactly what they want for black studies, as well as how to deal with academic politics in more sophisticated ways. Without doubt, the new institutional commitment is good for black studies and for black scholars.

Nevertheless, my optimism about the general picture also comes with qualifications. One wonders whether there is a direct relationship between the positive activity of white administrators and the ugly racial incidents at the University of Michigan, the University of Massa-

chusetts at Amherst, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison, among other institutions, over the past few years. Such incidents reflect deep-seated problems that have negative implications for black students and for black studies. In the Midwest, as in other parts of the country, black faculty and black studies (including the work of white scholars in black studies) are still engaged in a constant struggle to validate their existence. I agree fully with Hine that, as a whole, the scholarly community has come a long way in its general attitudes toward black studies, and that the field has undergone a dramatic change of status inside the academy. Black studies, however, has still not achieved full acceptance in the scholarly community—despite the fact that it has been one of the prime movers in revolutionizing the nature of accepted knowledge in the 1980s.

We have only to look at developments in Western literature as an example. A little more than a decade ago, few could have imagined the revisions that women and minorities, especially blacks, are currently making to the "sacred" canon. Still, black studies has a long way to go to achieve full dignity and acceptance in the academic community—much further, for instance, than women's studies. This gap is keenly felt in the Midwest, where some of the largest public institutions of higher education and strongest black studies programs in the country are located.

But the battle is not lost, and there is also reason to feel positive about the achievements and future of black studies. On the campuses that I visited, I heard high praise for black studies personnel from administrators, none of whom seemed to fear for the future of the field at their institutions. Black studies programs are aware of this administration support. Department and program chairs to whom I spoke unanimously agreed on that point, even as they spoke of other problems that impede their development—problems created by the unavailability of sufficient faculty to teach courses in various areas of the field, or by fiscal difficulties in the institutions.

Despite these difficulties, all black studies programs in the Midwest (weak and strong) were seriously recruiting faculty during the 1988–89 school year, and were engaged in searches for multiple old and new positions—not simply replacing faculty who have left. There is keen rivalry among the strongest programs, as each institution attempts to fill a number of positions.

The difficulty in securing adequate faculty is a common problem

for all black studies units in the Midwest. Geography plays an important role in this. Both established and younger black faculty—even those trained in the Midwest—are less likely to settle in the area. They seek appointments on the East or West coasts, usually in or near large urban centers with diverse populations. The problem is that many of the most academically attractive institutions of higher education in the Midwest—for example, the universities at Madison, Iowa City, and Evanston—are located in communities with very little ethnic and/or cultural diversity, and are therefore less appealing to minority faculty. The difficulty in attracting sufficient black studies faculty to these institutions results in certain courses not being taught regularly, which leads to a falling off of student interest and a loss of enthusiasm for the program among students who should support it most. This is a serious problem that needs to be addressed.

Attracting faculty to the Midwest is part of an even more serious problem facing black studies across the country: the extremely small pool of scholars in the field on both the junior and senior levels. On the junior level, we must convince more bright undergraduates to choose college and university teaching for a career. We have the opportunity to train them and to make sure that the work we began goes on when we can no longer do it. On the senior level, many of the black scholars who entered the job market a decade ago did not survive the stresses, and their loss leaves the small group of those who remained bearing a heavier load today. In addition, some who remained have been unable to pursue research and writing to advance themselves professionally. That has made the pool even smaller.

Many of those who are now successful mid-career scholars are being offered appointments in the nation's most prestigious institutions of higher education, with phenomenal salaries, minimal teaching loads, and generous research budgets. Black scholars have begun to join the ranks of academic luminaries, and their position is richly deserved. It is clearly in their best interests to take advantage of such opportunities.

On the other hand, only a few scholars remain to engage in the day-to-day struggles of full-time teaching, research, counseling, and other duties. They have to cope with less talented undergraduates and the frustrations of overwork. In the Midwest, this issue is more serious than in some other parts of the country. Few institutions (especially state institutions) in this region can afford "stars." For those that can,

the value of a single star is dubious in light of the resentment such a scholar can inspire among colleagues.

Although I can personally offer no swift or easy solution to this difficulty, it seems to me that black studies scholars in the Midwest might address the problem collectively, to the advantage of all concerned. For one thing, the strong black studies programs in these states are sufficiently different to create a productive dialogue and allow room for more cooperation than has existed so far. At Michigan and Ohio State, I floated the idea of a regional black studies conference in 1990—an academic conference—to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the field. This conference would be somewhat like the American history conference held at Purdue a few years ago, but on a broader scale. Such a conference not only would give us a chance to enumerate our gains and to applaud ourselves, but also would allow us to think and plan seriously together for more consolidated and unified success over the next twenty years.

Black studies is very much alive in the Midwest. Many programs are doing well, others are experiencing difficulties, and there are miles to go before any among us will be allowed to sleep. But black studies has survived its infancy and early childhood, and it is now moving ahead into what might well be a troubled adolescence. Nevertheless, the signs point to effective growth toward maturity. One measure of health is the number of students who take black studies courses, not as majors but for educational enrichment. Most people with whom I spoke noted the popularity of black studies classes, especially among white students seeking to learn something about the black experience. There is still a long road ahead, but black scholars, and white scholars in the field, are convinced that they must travel the hard path they have chosen so that when the "great books" on our civilization are opened, the history, literature, music, and culture of Africa's scattered children will have been prominently recorded, and the Mother can never again be denied.